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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Wise Creator, the One who made heaven and Earth and all that is in them, thank You for the honor of being made in Your image, personally formed by You for Your glory. Deliver us from pride or false modesty, as we give You credit for our abilities and live for Your glory.

Thank You, Lord, for our weaknesses and inadequacies and even our pain and distresses. You have allowed these in our lives that they may contribute to Your higher purposes. Please don't remove the mountains in our lives, but give us the strength to climb them.

Shower Your grace upon our Senators today and make them more than sufficient for these grand and awful times. Help them to walk humbly with You, as You bless and strengthen them. Lord, tend to the sick, give rest to the weary, and soothe the suffering. We pray this in Your wonderful name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWNBACK led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 12, 2004.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWNBACK thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will take a couple of minutes to lay out the schedule for today. This morning, the Senate will have a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes. Last night's orders provided that the first 30 minutes will be controlled by the majority and the final 30 minutes will be controlled by the minority.

Following morning business, the Senate will begin consideration of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education reauthorization bill, S. 1248. We will consider that bill under a previously agreed to order, which provides for a limited number of amendments per side. Chairman GREGG will be here to manage the bill on this side.

I expect there will be votes throughout the course of the day in relation to those amendments. We should be able to complete our work on this bill either late today or early tomorrow.

This morning, I wanted to again comment on the Executive Calendar and the mounting number of nominations. It is an important issue and important to our Nation and to the way we are viewed around the world. So I want to review the process again. I mentioned yesterday morning some of the specific pending ambassadorial nominations awaiting our action, in addition to the 32 judicial nominations. I know the distinguished assistant Democratic leader mentioned these ambassador nominations later in the day yesterday. Again, I want to restate what I mentioned yesterday morning. There are eight nominations for ambassadorships that are pending on the calendar. These nominations have been presented, have gone through committee, and are simply awaiting action on the floor of the Senate. It is not one, two, three, four, or five—it is eight. That includes ambassadorships to Sweden, Brazil, Finland, Romania, South Africa, Nepal, Poland, and Northern Ireland.

I know of a concern at this time by a Member on our side of the aisle with respect to one of these eight nominees; however, I don't believe there are concerns on either side of the aisle with respect to the remaining seven nominations. So we are prepared to confirm these other nominations and allow them to begin their important work for the United States of America, the work that awaits them at their posts in the countries I mentioned. Each one of these is important and significant. We are ready to move with them.

I do want to restate the intention of bringing it to the Senate floor yesterday, and that was that we need to work together on the nominations. It is really as simple as that. Eight nominations have gone through the entire vetting process up to this point, and they are simply awaiting action here on the floor of the Senate. We are prepared to confirm seven of those eight today.

I will also mention that this is true with respect to a number of judges. We

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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